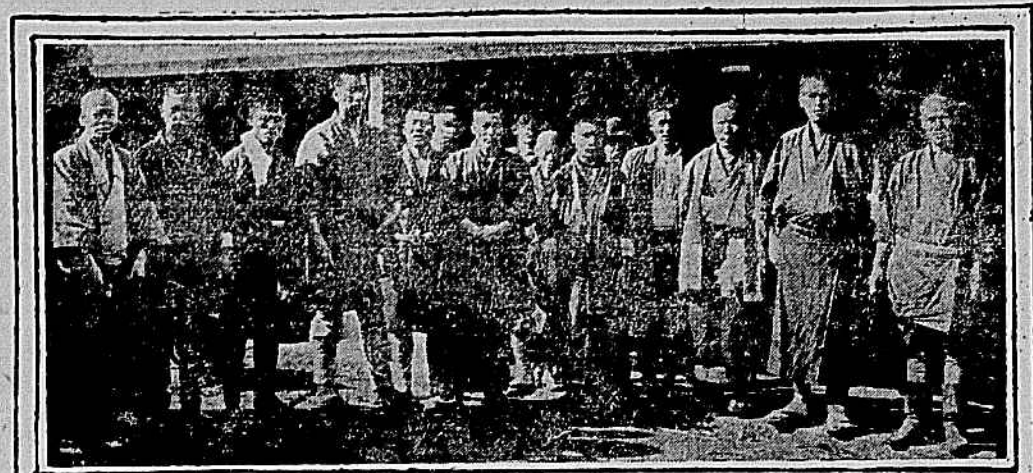


The Emp Yung League, Korea's Patriotic Assassins, Who Have Sworn to Drive Japanese Out of Their Country



KOREAN REBELS ARE SHOT OR HUNG UPON SIGHT.



THE UNRULY JAPANESE ELEMENT WHICH IS FLOODING KOREA.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Seoul, 1909.

The situation here in Korea is much the same as that of the Philippines at the close of our war with Spain. It is even worse on account of the horde of low class Japanese who are overrunning the country, and in many cases, outraging the natives. The average Korean cannot believe that Japan is anxious to develop this country for his good, and he considers it a patriotic duty to drive out the so-called invaders. There are organized societies of insurgents who have sworn to kill any Japanese soldier or citizen if they catch him apart from his fellows. Small bands of these societies are now scattered all over Korea. They have taken into their ranks the disaffected and racially officials who have lost their jobs by the Japanese taking hold of the government, as well as idlers and ex-soldiers, and even the old bandit element which has for generations preyed upon the country.

In the meantime the Japanese army is going all it can to wipe out these insurgents. General Hasegawa, the commander-in-chief, has something like 20,000 men in the field. These are scattered from one end of Korea to the other, and they shoot or hang the insurgents on sight. For a time the military policy was to wipe out every village which was found to be harboring insurgents, and to-day all who feed or conceal such men are shot without mercy.

Within the past year it is estimated that something like 12,000 people have been killed on the charge of being insurgents. The chronicles of the insurrections and the numbers killed and wounded are published from day to day in the Seoul Press, which is the organ of the government, and foreigners who have kept count tell me that the deaths are running very close to 1,000 per month. This seems an enormous number, especially as the authorities say that the conditions are growing better and better, and that the rebels, with the exception of bandits and professional brigands, have almost disappeared. There is no doubt but that Japan must manage Korea with a strong hand if she would bring about peace and order, but it is questionable whether her methods are not over severe.

Dilemma Versus the Revolver.

And still the situation is serious. There are, perhaps, 15,000,000 people on this peninsula, and if the rebellion is allowed to go on this guerrilla warfare will be continued for years. The Koreans are, to some extent, divided up into parties. There are a number of pro-Japanese who are accepting the situation, cutting off their topknots and taking advantage of the new civilization. The rebels consider these men traitors to their country, and they shoot them even more readily than the Japanese themselves. At the same time the pro-Japanese inform upon their enemies among the insurgents and aid the soldiers in hunting

them down. Indeed, it is important for a Korean now traveling over the country to show that he is not in favor of the Japanese government. If he wears foreign clothes or has cut off his hair he is almost sure to be pestered by the rebels sooner or later, and he may be shot upon sight.

A curious phase of this situation is that the Korean Christians are supposed to be neutral or not in favor of the Japanese government. For this reason if a Korean traveler is met by a band of insurgents he tries to convince them that he belongs to our church. The rebels make him prove his faith, and demand that he sing a hymn or recite the Lord's prayer. He is sometimes asked to say the Ten Commandments as well. Indeed, an increased demand for hymn books and Bibles in Korea has sprung up, and many who are not Christians buy these to carry with them over the country. They are better than revolvers, and often save the life of the owner.

The largest association of these rebels is known as the Emp Yung League. The people here pronounce it Weep Yung. It means the ever righteous and patriotic army, and its members are sworn to kill all Japanese, found alone, upon sight. It was to this league that the assassins who murdered Durham White Stevens belonged, and it is said there are branches of it in the Hawaiian Islands, in the United States and elsewhere.

The Emp Yung League has no organized forces, and they are merely guerrillas. At first they were largely composed of patriots who had sworn to die for their country. They are now made up of the disaffected of all sorts. Many of them are ex-soldiers of the Korean army, which was disbanded by the Japanese at the time when they deposed the old Emperor and put his son in his place.

They have no money, and live on the villages. This fact puts the peace-loving Koreans between the devil and the deep sea. When a band of rebels comes to him and demands money or food he replies that he dare not give it, for the Japanese soldiers will shoot him as soon as they learn he has helped the insurgents. Thereupon the rebels reply: "Well, if you don't give us what we want we will kill you right now. If you give up, you have at any rate the chance of living a day or so longer. Otherwise you will die." The rebels mean what they say, and the villagers know it. They give, and in many cases are actually slaughtered by the Japanese soldiers for giving. Indeed, I am told that many of the so-called insurgents whose deaths are reported in the newspapers are members of villages who have thus forcibly been made to harbor insurgents.

The Soldiers and the Christians.

The soldiers are instructed to put down the insurgents, and they have trouble in finding out who the insurgents are. The native Christians are

generally neutral, but the soldiers suspect them. Not long ago they surrounded a church far off in the interior, where 300 people were worshipping. The officer instructed the pastor to go on with his devotions, but as soon as church was over he corralled the members as they came out and asked their names. As he did so he looked over a list of the suspects in the neighborhood and checked the names off. At the close he let them all go. He said these people are all Christians and must not be molested.

Another church was less mercifully treated, the soldiers stopping the congregation and tearing up the hymn books. What provocation they had I do not know.

From a large army like this, scattered in small bands over the country, away from their officers, there are bound to be outrages now and then. One small officer, for instance, upon being told not to tie his horse in the churchyard because it would eat the trees, cursed the sexton and cut him over the head with his sword. This was reported by the missionaries and the man was degraded.

I have met foreigners who have claimed that they were badly treated by soldiers by whom they were stopped when traveling over the country. One such case was that of A. R. Weigall, an Australian mining engineer, who had his wife with him. The soldiers insulted the latter, and Weigall narrowly escaped being shot. The treatment of Mrs. Weigall was barbarous. The Japanese excuse this, however, by saying that Weigall refused to give information about himself to the soldiers. When they asked him how old he was he said, "One hundred and ten," and he claimed that his name was King Edward the Sixth, and that he lived in Buckingham Palace. Similar answers given to a company of our troops in the Philippines would not lead to good treatment, although none of them would commit the barbarity and indecencies performed by this Japanese squad.

Koreans Against Koreans.

It is also claimed that a great deal of the fighting is a matter of private warfare between the Koreans. There is no end of feuds among these people, and the average native will do anything to bring about the death of those against whom he has a personal grudge.

The Japanese do not understand the Korean language, and they have to rely upon the natives as spies and interpreters. Such men point out those whom they hate as insurgents, and as a result have taken many of the old Korean soldiers into their police force and are using them as gens d'armes throughout the country. Such Koreans are much more cruel than the Japanese themselves, and they are believed to be responsible for a large proportion of attacks upon the so-called insurgents.

The Country Unsafe.

With conditions like these, the country is unsafe for foreigners who



OFFICIALS WHO HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS.



THE KOREANS ARE SIMPLE.

traveling without some kind of protection. The Korean people believe in the missionaries and the rebels respect them, but many of the bands are ignorant to an extreme, and at a distance they cannot tell the difference between a Japanese and a European. Many Japanese dress in European clothes, and the rebels are prone to think any man so dressed a Japanese, and to shoot him on sight. Not long ago Mr. Erdman, a Presbyterian missionary at Taku, about 100 miles north of Fusan, went on a trip over the country. He had on a khaki suit, and khaki is the color worn by the Japanese soldiers when in the field. As a result, he was taken for a Japanese, and narrowly escaped with his life. The rebels who captured him insisted he was lying when he told them he was a missionary, and an American. It was only his fair hair and blue eyes that enabled him to hold them back until some more intelligent Koreans arrived and convinced his captors that he was speaking the truth. Another missionary who was traveling in black clothes was also attacked and had a narrow escape.

The Rebels and Our Consul-General.

Some of these Emp Yungs operate in the mountains, not far from the capital, and pleasure parties from Seoul are often in danger. A few months ago Mr. Thomas Sammons, the American consul-general, took a picnic trip with his wife and son into the mountains near the city. He was always a show the men that they were Americans and to keep them from firing. Had these Emp Yungs done as many of their fellows frequently do—that is, shoot on sight—the boy would have been killed.

The Koreans and the United States.

This attack upon the consul-general had nothing whatever to do with the feeling which many patriotic Koreans now hold in regard to our country. Until the present time they have always looked upon us as their best friends among the nations. It was our government which made the first treaty that opened their land to the world. This was in 1852, when Commodore Shufeldt came here with a fleet and had a conference with the King.

In this treaty it was stated that if other powers dealt unjustly or oppressively with Korea that the United States would interfere and try to bring about an amicable arrangement. The Koreans construed this as meaning that we would support them against any other nation that oppressed them. Before the Emperor was deposed he sent commissioners to America, asking our aid against the Japanese, and the commissioners were not received. Many of the people look upon this as a breach of international faith, and feel that we have sold them out to Japan.

It was this that largely caused the assassination of Stevens. He was an American in the employ of the Japanese, and was sent to Korea to spy out the land and prepare the way for a big force which should punish Japan. This, when sifted down, proved to be the truth. The company of men and women who have now arrived from England to organize a Salvation Army movement in Korea.

Koreans must starve. There is no food in the country. The Koreans would now like to go to America, and they bitterly resent the presence of the Japanese, which prevents their leaving the country. They

are not allowed to sail for the United States from any of the Korean ports, and they should go to China they would be kept from sailing to America via Shanghai. Some of the people want to go just because they cannot. One such came to one of our missionaries the other day and asked him to arrange some way for him to get out of the country. He said: "It is the strangest thing that I never wanted to visit America before, but now that I cannot, I am crazy to go."

I believe this policy is a mistake on the part of the Japanese. They should allow the Koreans to go where they please and tell them that they will aid them in getting away. The probability is that a very few might migrate, but the masses would appreciate the fairness of such a method and it would make them more friendly to Japan.

The missionaries say that the Koreans are much like children, and they judge such matters for themselves. They are kindly disposed to foreigners, and never call them "Japs" or "Yankees" or "foreign devils," as the Chinese. They have always been friendly

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characters at go to our mining camps on the noise of a big gold discovery. There are gamblers and rowdies, drunkards and loafers and men who have left their country for their country's good; and there are business men of shady reputation who are glad to make money in any questionable way.

It would not be fair to say that the whole immigration is of this nature, but a goodly part of it is so, and as usual the bad men and women push their way to the front. The faces of many of the Japanese are mean and not friendly. The stare at you as though they thought you had no right in Korea, and make no bones of brushing against you, or crowding you to the side of the road. If there is resentment there is sure to be trouble; and it is one of the things that have made the police so strict in their treatment of the Japanese. I know of foreign men and women who have been struck and not been able to sue for damages. Numerous instances where the Korean servants of foreigners have been ill-treated by Japanese coolies.

Money and Land Grabbers.

It is from this element that the so-called outrages of the Japanese upon the Koreans come, and at present the situation is such that it is difficult to hold it in check. The Koreans are simple, and a Japanese will loan money to them on their houses and lands on condition that he is to have the property if the debt is not paid. These loans are at high rates of interest, such as have always been common in Korea. I hear of mortgages at 10 per cent. a month, and about the lowest rate charged by any one outside the banks is 20 per cent. yearly. Such interest rates soon eat up the property, and it goes into the hands of the Japanese. In the past the Koreans have been anxious to get the money on credit, but now they are loath to do so. The Japanese are making loans to any of the property owners who are willing to take them. This position is most attractive to the simple Koreans. He borrows without thinking how he shall meet his debt when it comes due. The interest accumulates, and he loses his property. Indeed, the prospect is that the best Korean lands and houses will find their way into the hands of Japanese through such deals.

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